



*Brighton*  
**Unitarians**



## **December and January Newsletter**

### **Sunday Services**

Please note: services are at 11 a.m. apart from our Carol Service which is at 6pm. See below for details

We would be grateful if you would switch off your phones before the start of the service.

### **SERVICES AND MEETINGS IN DECEMBER**

01st December - Phillida Simpson, Member. Brighton Unitarian Church  
Pianist Joe Ward

08th December - Susie Courtault, Brighton Unitarian Church  
Pianist Stuart Deeks

15th December - Carol Service  
Please note this is at 6pm  
Jef Jones Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church,  
Organist Maurice Rigby

22nd December - Winter Solstice Service  
Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church  
Pianist Pamela Nickels

29th December - Francis Clark-Lowes, Member, Brighton Unitarian Church  
Pianist Kathy Pitt

Quiet Reflection 7 - 8 pm, Thursday 12th December 2019.

There are no Heart and Soul Meetings in December

## **SERVICES AND MEETINGS IN JANUARY**

05th January Rev Susie Courtault, Member, Brighton Unitarian Church

12th January Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church.

19th January Rev Jennifer Sanders, Member, Brighton Unitarian Church

26th January Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church  
followed by the Annual Meeting.

Quiet Reflection 7 - 8 pm, Thursday 9th, January 2020

Heart and Soul Meetings in January: 7.30 pm, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

## **Our Mission Statement**

Brighton Unitarian Church provides a caring environment, with spiritual depth, without dogma, offering a community resource to diverse groups in congruence with our values, promoting a diversity of Unitarianism nationally, and with a concern for a more compassionate world.

## **Welcome from Jef**

Welcome to our Newsletter for December 2019 and January 2020

Is it too soon to ask you to put dates in your diary for 2020? It might seem a little way off, but don't forget our Annual Meeting is after the service on Sunday, January 26th. A little further away is FUSE, the annual Unitarian festival, returning to Worthing on February 21st to 23rd next year. This year's keynote speaker is Philip Roderick, founder of the Quiet Garden Movement, and the theme of the festival is Working Within. There will be quite a few Unitarians from Brighton going so please do consider coming to Worthing with us for a mystical weekend! You can find more details below.

But in the meantime Happy Christmas!

## **Best wishes and Thank You Marion**

You may know that our church manager, Marion Bance, is leaving after eleven years in post. Running our church is not easy - the demands of a busy arts venue and

meeting space have to be balanced with those of our spiritual community which needs the income generated by lettings to sustain its sacred space. Moreover, two periods of major building work over the last ten years have threatened to disrupt our regular hirers and our congregation. Marion has managed complex challenges like these with great sensitivity and professionalism. During her time here the numbers of lettings and rites of passage have increased hugely. Thanks to Marion we now have an excellent reputation as a music and arts venue and as a setting for weddings, child namings and funerals. So, to cut a long story short, Marion has made an excellent contribution to our church

Thank you Marion, for all your work and best wishes for your well-deserved retirement.

## From the Lay Leader

In an interview in 1985, the Czech dissident Vaclav Havel said *Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart.* He was speaking at a time when human rights and democracy must have seemed a rather distant dream to many Eastern Europeans, and the Soviet domination of their countries insurmountable. Yet only four years later Havel became President of Czechoslovakia, and in 1993 was elected President of the Czech Republic after its split from Slovakia.

In the same interview Havel says *Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed. The more unpromising the situation in which we demonstrate hope, the deeper that hope is.*

For me this deep sense of hope is at the heart of Christmas. There is something sacred about the birth of any baby, and the Christmas story reminds us that innocence and possibility are not just precious but reborn. They are restored to our often cynical and jaded world in the form of new life. The old pagan roots of the winter festival remind us of this too. Throughout November and December the sun seems to become frailer and frailer and yet on the day of the solstice it is reborn. Little by little the light returns. Things change and what's more, however helpless we might feel, we can contribute to that change.

No one could be blamed for feeling a little hopeless at the moment. Our nation is divided and public discourse is often bitter. The ice caps are melting and forests are burning. This, though, is why hope is vital. The beauty of our planet, the achievements of human beings in science and the arts are worth hoping for. Surely the future of our children and grandchildren is worth the risk of hope.

I wish you a happy Christmas and a hopeful New Year.

## From the Committee

The management committee meets on the second Monday of each month to discuss the running of the church, the building and our engagement with the wider community. Members of the congregation can read minutes of the committee at any time ~ they are kept in a folder in the office.

In November we discussed ideas for being more welcoming to children, which we recognise to be an important way forward. We do not have any definite plans to report on, but this will stay on our agenda.

We are in the initial stages of planning to look for a new minister in preparation for our Jef's moving on to new pastures next autumn. We will share all our thoughts on how to move forward with this with the congregation at the Annual General Meeting on 26th January.

Sad as we are that Marion is leaving us, we are pleased to say that our new Church Manager, Ashleigh Ward, will be joining us in January. Marion and Ashleigh will work together on the handover in December.

We are planning the committee for 2020. Two members are leaving and we are interested to hear from anyone who has been a member for a year who would like to consider joining the committee.

Brighton Unitarian Church Committee are  
Co Chair Caroline Drijver  
Co Chair Fanny Tulley  
Treasurer Kathy Pitt  
Secretary Jo O'Sullivan  
Trisha Purchas  
Jennifer Sanders  
Jeannette Webb

## FUSE Festival 2020

Quite a few members from Brighton Unitarian Church will be going to the annual Unitarian festival in Worthing. This year **FUSE** focuses on the theme **Working From Within**. With a line-up of workshops, social activities and spiritual practices to nourish the mind, body and soul **FUSE Festival** is one event you don't want to miss. **Join us in February 21st-23rd 2020!**

This year's keynote speaker, Philip Roderick, is the founder of The Quiet Garden Movement ([quietgarden.org](http://quietgarden.org)), Contemplative Fire ([contemplativefire.org](http://contemplativefire.org)) and Hidden Houses of Prayer ([hiddenhousesofprayer.wordpress.com](http://hiddenhousesofprayer.wordpress.com)). Philip will speak at the Friday Seminar, our Saturday morning Plenary Worship Session and run a workshop on Sunday. His themes are: 'The Power Pause', 'From the Small to the All' and 'Rhythm of Life'. Philip is also a percussionist and plays a special steel drum called a Hang. You'll have to come along to hear it!

You can find more details at [www.ldpaunitarians.org/fuse](http://www.ldpaunitarians.org/fuse).

## **National Churches Trust**

On Friday 15th November at an awards ceremony in the Mercers' Hall, London the National Churches Trust in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust, awarded Brighton Unitarian Church, FIRST RUNNER UP in the GOOD GUARDIANSHIP AWARDS and £1500 towards ongoing care.

The NCT commended the maintenance plan introduced to secure the building's future as an active centre of cultural and community activities in the city.

In a statement Marion Bance, Administrator, said: "Brighton Unitarian is delighted to have received the National Churches Trust award for excellence in church maintenance planning. Our ongoing relationship with the NCT is very important to us. In 2017 Brighton Unitarian was on the At Risk Register with serious problems found to the church's iconic columns and portico. We thought at one time that we may even have to close our doors. But with the help of generous grant giving bodies, such as the NCT, we were able to embark on a huge restoration project. Since then, we have given a great deal of time and attention to drawing up and working with a maintenance plan to ensure that our wonderful, Grade II building is safe for future generations. We fully understand that we are custodians of the building and it is our privilege as well as our responsibility to ensure that it is cared for in the proper way."

## **Your Committee Needs You!**

Jef wrote an encouraging piece in October's newsletter, and time is now running out to gird our loins!

As he highlighted: "our church can only function because each year some of its members volunteer to join the Committee and meet each month to oversee the maintenance and use of the building, our finances and our paid staff and volunteers."

There are discussions to be had and decisions to be made, but – as Unitarians - we're a nice bunch and support each other. The Committee is made up of between 6 and 9 people.

So, please do seriously consider if you could contribute to our church by becoming a Committee member.

Or perhaps there's someone else you think would be good in this role.

If you'd like a general chat about what serving on the Committee involves, then do talk to Jef or to any of the current committee members (photos on the wall by the kitchen!).

The Formal Bits:

To nominate a person for election to the Committee please fill out the nomination form on the website ('Community' tab) or use a paper copy from the foyer. Note that both the person nominated and the person nominating need to have been a church member for 12 months.

Please submit nomination forms by Sunday 15 December 2019. Elections will take place at the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 26 January 2020 after the service.

## Heart and Soul

7.30 pm Thurs 2nd January

7.30 pm Thurs 16th January

Heart and Soul gatherings are an opportunity for us to come together as a congregation during the week. There is a time of reflection and stillness and we go on to explore different aspects of our spiritual lives together. Everyone is welcome! If you would like to lead a gathering of Heart and Soul, or suggest a topic for discussion you are also welcome.

Please note there will be no Heart and Soul meetings in December. Starting in January Heart and Soul meetings will take place on the first and third Thursday evenings of each month, and will begin at the later time of 7.30 pm.

## Quiet Reflective Circle

Thursday, 12th December, 7 - 8 pm,

Thursday 9th, January, 7 - 8 pm,

At our monthly Quiet Reflection Circle we gather for candle lighting and quiet reflection. As always there will be readings, time for candle-lighting, stillness and a few simple closing words.

If you've been having a busy week, and could do with some stillness, do come along. If you're looking for a time and place to reconnect with your spirit, do come along. If you'd like to sit quietly in a sacred place, please do come along. All are welcome!



## December

**6th:** The Lyrical Euphonium. Martin Smith accompanied by Chris Coote. Includes works by Hummel, Strauss, Sir Karl Jenkins, Mahler, Sarasate and Vaughan Williams.

**13th:** The a capella group A Bunch Of Daph's return with a programme of Advent & Christmas music ranging from the mediaeval period to popular favourites from the 20th century.

**20th:** Nick Andrews & Friends Christmas - becoming a BUC tradition. Arrive in good time to ensure a seat.

## January

**3rd:** Alex Bondonno (saxophone) and Joss Peach (piano) come together for a lunchtime jazz recital. These renowned jazz musicians perform interpretations of classic jazz standards from Horace Silver, Abdullah Ibrahim, Thelonious Monk and more, plus original compositions.

**10th:** Solo guitarist Nick Tudgey playing a mixture of songs from Country to Classical, Ragtime to Jazz, Movie Scores and 16th Century Lute music, all arranged for solo guitar in the style of Chet Atkins and Tommy Emmanuel.

**17th:** Luca Luciano presents his 'Clarinet Solo Project' featuring original material along with music by Stravinsky and Berio as part of a UK tour to promote his new album.

**24th:** Di Bari - Semerano Piano Duo. Pianists Giulia Semerano and Filippo Di Bari playing W. A. Mozart, Variations in G Major K 501. J. Brahms, Variations on a theme by R. Schumann op. 23. A. Casella, Pagine di guerra op. 25

**31st:** Pianist Constance Chow performs lesser known piano works - Maurice Ravel's Valses nobles et sentimentales and York Bowen's Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 72

Doors and coffee at 12 noon. Concert 12.30 - 1.15 p.m. Suggested donation £4.

## Fundraising

Christmas is nearly upon us and Christine Clark-Lowes' up-cycled Christmas cards are still on sale in the Church.. Please do have a look through her collection. Every purchase adds to our Building Appeal Fund.

Once again our thanks to Christine for all the work she does in creating these unique and lovely cards.

## Thank you from Anne

Anne, who brings the beautiful flowers to our services, would like to pass on her thanks for all the items of bric a brac and milk bottle tops members have brought for her fundraising for charities and good causes., including SeeKenya ([seekenya.org](http://seekenya.org)). This is a UK-based charity providing eye care services to marginalised communities in Kenya. They provide cataract surgery and eye drops for the treatment of trachoma, the leading cause of blindness in children. Please do continue to donate broken watches and jewellery, odd earrings and cufflinks, obsolete keys and coins,

and postage stamps and old glasses and sunglasses. These are much appreciated and really do make a difference.

## Goodbye and Thank You

The time has nearly come for me to say goodbye. I move on with some sadness, but in the sure knowledge that I leave you all in the capable hands of Ashleigh Ward. For the past eleven and a half years, my role as administrator has been very important to me. I feel incredibly lucky to have found a job where I have been granted the freedom to grow myself and the role. The faith and trust that you all placed in me to care for your sacred space has been humbling, sometimes scary, but always greatly appreciated. But above all of this, it has been the people that I have worked with that have made this such a dream job - my fellow staff members, members of the church, volunteers, the regular hirers, the people who have come to us to organise their special events and all the hundreds of others who have passed through the Church's red doors into my little office. I will miss you all, but having said that, I will see you at the Friday lunchtime concerts where my tea making skills will continue to be put to good use!

My very best wishes to you all individually and to the Church as a quite remarkable community.

Marion

## Dates for Your Diary

Sunday 15th December, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Carol Service in the Church. All welcome.

To keep up-to-date with all that is happening at Brighton Unitarian visit our website [www.brightonunitarian.org.uk](http://www.brightonunitarian.org.uk) or follow us on:

Twitter: @BrightUnitarian

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrightonUnitarian/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/brightonunitarianchurch/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT1m35l-Urvbyq2AsRRsF9g>